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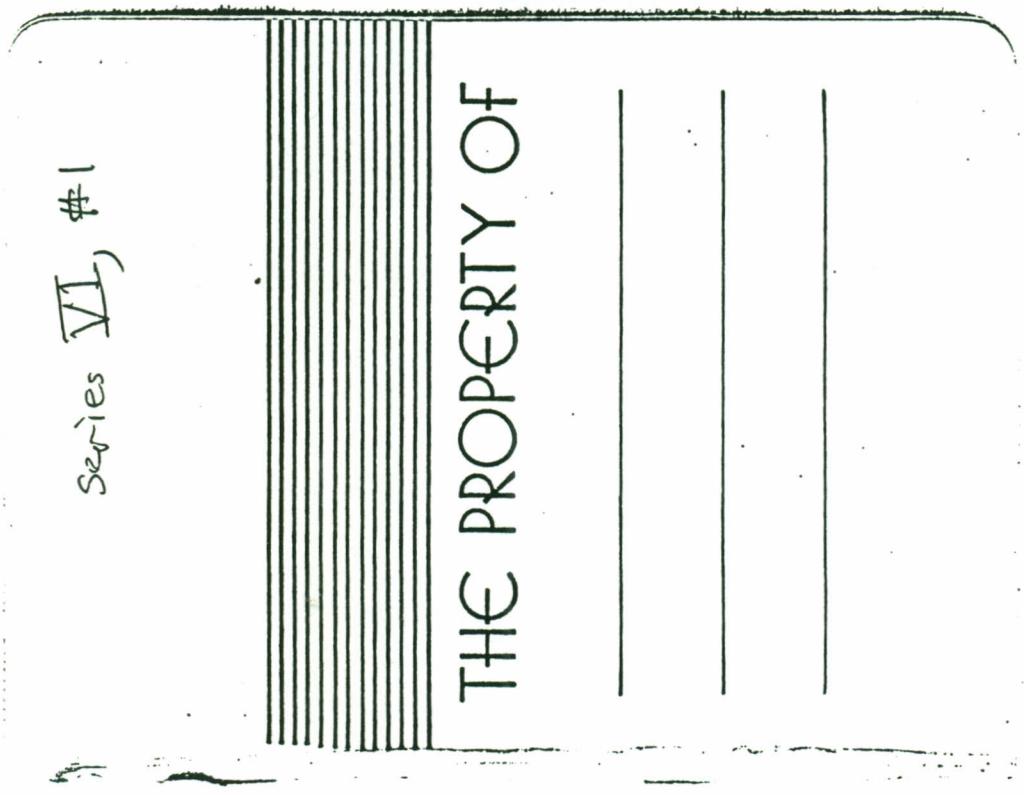

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Series VI, #1 ~~JANUARY 1 Sept 20, 1972~~

Sept. 20, 1972: (Actually written on Sept. 18, only recopied here on the 20th): I have been pretty busy during the day here in Great Falls, running around trying to get various things that I need — felt liners for my boots, materials for repairing my snowshoes, etc. But in the evenings there hasn't been much to do, so I took to reading Joseph Conrad's "The Arrow of Gold", a copy of which has been lying around here. This is supposed to have been his last complete book, and one of his inferior works. But for some reason I felt very refreshed after reading the story — invigorated, and my spirits buoyed up. I still feel that way. This is a

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little peculiar, since I don't actually consider the story to have been a good one. In fact I found much of it irritating. I rather disliked the hero and heroine, ~~the action~~ and the actions of some of the characters seemed highly improbable. While I have no particular objection to romanticism in literature, some of this stuff was really just too lush (Dona Rita is repeatedly described as "having something in her of the women of all time"; phrases like "sublime passion" appeared; and a lot of similar stuff — awful hogwash). As with many of Conrad's stories, I found it too long-winded and therefore skipped some of the more tiresome passages. Nevertheless,

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the story struck a responding chord in me, though I didn't feel this until I had finished reading it. It's hard to say just what it was, but despite the annoying character of the story (which induced me to insert some sarcastic notes in the margins), there was something there. Perhaps it stirred memories of an adolescent crush — but I do not ordinarily find that refreshing. More likely, I think it was that the story managed to convey an image of a kind of generalized romance — I don't mean specifically erotic romance (although the romance in the story was erotic), but simply romance in general. And somehow (for me) this romance came through refreshing and

clean, despite the presence of a good deal of slushy nonsense. Consider the title, "The Arrow of Gold," and the actual arrow of gold that appeared in the story. Now that is a trite enough symbol, certainly, but Conrad nevertheless has made it stick in my imagination and evoke a certain response.

Perhaps I reacted to the story as I did largely because before taking up The Arrow of Gold, I had been reading to a certain extent in current magazines and newspapers. As usual, I found much of that material sordid and disgusting, and full of propagandistic devices. It may have been the contrast

that made The Arrow of Gold seem so refreshing. In any case, I certainly did find it both refreshing and invigorating.

Jan 17, 1973: Well, for a little over a month I have been working for a couple of bricklayers here in Salt Lake City. Typically I work about 9½ hours a day, 6 days a week, and it is hard work, too — made harder by the mud, slush, snow, and cold. Yesterday I got 2 checks back in the mail, with a note from the bank saying that these pricks had insufficient funds to cover them. When I came to work at 6:30 this morning I complained, naturally. So the Boss said "Oh, don't worry about it, those checks

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will go through alright now," and gave ~~some~~ some excuse to the effect that somebody else didn't pay him on time. A couple of hours later, he sent me over to do some work on another house, and said he would come over there himself shortly. On the way, I stopped at his bank and tried to cash those 2 checks. They cashed one, but there wasn't enough in the account to cover both. That means that another check, which I just deposited, is going to bounce too. I had the bank hold that one check for collection. Then I continued over to that other house. The boss didn't show up, and I didn't want to wait all day for him, so I just

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left him a note telling him that I would not work any more until I got paid, and that I wanted to get paid in cash hereafter. Then I went home. We shall see what the outcome is. I may have to take them to small-claims court, or maybe there is some other agency through which I can apply pressure. (In addition to the 2 bad checks still outstanding, I still have 40 hours pay coming to me for which I still haven't even got a check yet.) Judging ~~from~~ from an item I saw in the paper, I think maybe people can even be arrested in Utah for ~~writing~~ writing an insufficient-funds check. Of

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course, all this is very bad for me, because my objective here is to accumulate ~~as much~~ some money as fast as possible, so that I can go back to the woods. On the other hand, I find it somewhat exhilarating. It is a break from routine, an opportunity to take effective action (at least, I hope effective) on an individual basis — an increasingly unusual opportunity for most of us in organized society. So I am almost glad it turned out this way. Of course, I guess I won't be so glad if I can't collect all my money.

N.B. I eventually did collect all of above money.

JANUARY 9

Oct. 1, 1974: Some remarks concerning myself and (ugh) women. I have had very little to do with females. There was only one girl whom I ever even kissed. Of course, I have been attracted to many girls. I have concluded that there are two distinct kinds of sexual attraction — call them type 1 and type 2. Type 1 can be characterized as follows: When one looks at the female in question, one's eyes are riveted on the sexual areas of her body; the sight of her body causes an almost immediate tendency to erection; in thinking about her one's thoughts turn immediately to bedroom scenes; one has no more interest in her feelings or her personal well-being than one would in

those of any other 120-lb. load of meat. With type 2, when it occurs in relatively pure form, one's eyes are attracted equally to all parts of the girl's body, unless, perhaps they are more attracted to her face; One is very slow to have an erection from looking at or thinking about her; In daydreaming about her one's thoughts take a long time to come around to bedroom scenes, and when these occur they play far from a dominant role. Instead, one dreams of holding her hand and telling her ~~your~~ one lovesher, or of saving her from danger, or of doing things to make her happy. The fact that one is slow to have an erection from such fantasies

might tempt one to say that the type two feeling is not erotic. But I would describe it as purely erotic. For one thing, I cannot conceive of my having ~~any~~ such feelings toward anyone but a young, good-looking girl or woman. More important, type 2 feels intensely erotic.

When type 2 occurs in highly developed form, one typically gets a kind of electric thrill from the mere sight of the girl. There is often something strangely mysterious about the type 2 feeling, something that seems like an echo from some unremembered past. The feeling is intensely pleasurable, but for me it also has ~~is~~ always been painful, perhaps solely

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because I have never gotten the girl in question.

I think that type 2 never occurs in highly developed form (for me, anyway) ~~only when~~ except when it occurs soon after one has first met the girl; it is not to be confused with the kind of comfortable domestic affection that develops through long association. This last is perhaps not even erotic.

Just four times over a span of 22 years (God! that's a long time. Makes me feel old) I have experienced Type 2 in something like pure form — and the fourth and last instance must be regarded as a little questionable because it is too

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recent to be seen in perspective. I will describe this latest instance first, while it is still fresh in my memory, because I may not get around to finishing this entry very promptly.

For not quite three weeks I have worked as a service station attendant at Raynesford. I quit yesterday because the wages were low, I didn't like the work, and I didn't like the boss. During the first few days I was there, until she left to go back to school, there was a college girl working there, about 19 years old, named Sandi Boughton. Of the four with whom I have been infatuated, she is the only one who could not be

OCT 1, 1974 ?

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~~because I have never gotten the girl involved~~

considered beautiful. Her face was presentable, but I would say it fell a little short of being even just pretty. Her figure was imperfect, but it was her principal physical attraction. Her body was so lithe, fresh, firm, and vigorous. I learned later that she was something of an athlete. Blond, blue-eyed, rather on the small side. She was the daughter of a rancher near Raynesford, and she was, I believe, about to commence her second year at the University of Montana. I found her attractive from the start, and after a couple of days I just couldn't get her out of

my thoughts. As usual with a type 2 attraction, the thing was completely senseless. I did not have much in common with her, and she had some characteristics that antagonized me. I will list some of her attractions, but I don't consider them sufficient to explain my infatuation. I have already mentioned her lithe, fresh body. There was a piquant streak in her personality hinting of masculinity: her athletic pursuits (of which I shall say more later) and propensity for driving away from the station with a very heavy foot on the accelerator. (This last antagonized me and attracted me at the same time). Nevertheless her personality as a whole was thoroughly feminine. She seemed to be just a shade

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cross or sullen at times, but I felt that she was essentially quite gentle and soft. On one occasion I heard her laughing to herself in the most charming, girlish manner ...

Soon after she walked in on the first day, the bosses second-in-command, a muscular, heavily-built, married man in his forties, engaged in some horseplay with her — grasped her around the waist from behind and wrestled with her for a few moments. She seemed to enjoy it. I do not doubt that the motive was sexual on both sides, though it may not have been consciously so. In fact, I was rather surprized at the extent to which she was apt to lay hands playfully on some of the

JANUARY 17

males around there. All that, I suppose, is probably a reflection of contemporary mores, but it certainly made me feel contemptuous toward her. She never laid hands on me though — probably because of my comparatively aloof and stolid demeanor. She frequently used words like "shit" and "son of a bitch", and I didn't like that, either, though it was no doubt just another reflection of current mores. She was not 100% callous about that sort of thing, though. On an occasion that arose in conversation the above-mentioned second-in-command quipped that "Sandi knows what part to put her hand on!" She seemed somewhat embarrassed and said "God, you guys are so incredibly gross!" Until about the third or fourth day I had nothing to

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say to her other than strictly business, aand "good morning" on coming in at the start of the day. For some reason she usually seemed a little sullen in returning my "good morning." On the third or fourth morning, when we were the only two on duty, she was sitting on her favorite perch, a pile of tires in front of the station, and I was nearby, sweeping the cement in my usual methodical fashion. She said, "You make it look so easy. I'm always all tuckered out after I sweep this." Pause. "It's good for working out your frustrations though." I remarked that "I get my exercise from running, anyway." She said something to the effect that "I've got to get back in shape.

I've got to start swimming again." The conversation then rambled on for a few minutes, with her doing most of the talking, and it developed that she had been a runner on her highschool track team. After a short while my sweeping carried me away from where she was sitting, but when I had finished, I walked back to where she was sitting, leaned on my broom, and said, "If you like ~~exce~~ exercise, I suppose you like outdoor-type stuff, hiking and so forth." She assented, but in a hesitant and unenthusiastic way. I mentioned that I had spent the greater part of the summer with a backpack in the Lincoln backcountry. She said she had never really had a chance to try that sort of thing.

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Then she rambled on again for awhile, doing most of the talking, saying, among other things, that she thought she might like to have a park-ranger type of job, then that she didn't know what to do (with her life). She said she was an enthusiastic skier, that if she couldn't ski, then life wouldn't be worth while or something to that effect. "Cross-country?" I asked. She said "No, downhill," and said she was inclined to feel that cross-country skiing was something for city people who were starved for fresh air and open spaces and that kind of thing. She also said she was on the "ski patrol", apparently some kind of rescue organization for people in difficulty on the ski slopes. Later she mentioned that she wanted to get a motorcycle. I said "I hate those things." And then we got into an argument over

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motorcycles and snowmobiles. The reader knows my attitude toward those things. She defended them, with reservations, saying that they were alright if not used inconsiderately. It seemed that, like most people, she did not have a sharp analytical mind — her answers to some points I made were not rationally responsive; essentially she just rambled on following her own train of thought. After a bit I got rather disgusted and began to just stare off into space, making little response to what she said. (That is another characteristic of Type 2; one has occasional rational intervals during which one is nauseated by one's own folly in being so stuck on some silly girl.) Anyhow, she rambled on for a while in her pleasant voice, not making much sense. She gave what I took to

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be a little homily on toleration — in this instance toward snowmobilers and the like. She compared it to "when I was in high school and thought differently from the other kids" or was different, or something; but it wasn't clear to me whether she meant she was supposed to be tolerant of the other kids or whether they were supposed to be tolerant of her. She mentioned that a couple of times, about being "different". I laughed inwardly at that, because she sounded to me like a pretty standard goody-liberal. That type always thinks they are "different", but they are some of the biggest conformists around. This points up another characteristic of type 2; it seems to have little relation to anything sensible like common interests & attitudes, or characteristics that one can respect. Finally she closed her monologue with "Oh, don't mind me, I'm just blathering on." There were a few more snatches of conversation between us after that, and then it was back to just strictly business between us. I thought I detected later a trace of crossness in her speech to me, especially on the last day before she left. Now, if the reader is capable of noticing the obvious, he will have perceived in my detailed reporting of all this unremarkable conversation a clear sign of senseless infatuation. Was she attracted to me? I could answer that question by tossing a coin as well as any other way. I just don't know. I have been so socially isolated for so long that I do not know how to interpret any indications that may bear on that question. But it is probably safe to say

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that if she was attracted to me it was not to nearly the same extent that I was attracted to her. If she had been that much attracted to me she presumably would have given some sign obvious enough so that even I would have no doubt about the interpretation. Of course, I gave no sign that I was attracted to her, but that is only because I am excessively inhibited with attractive women.

I can't get her off my mind. She was such a ... well, ray of sunshine that I hunger for the sight of her. Yet I know very well that if I were not infatuated I would not have any respect for her. I am disgusted at my own weakness for her.

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Now let's go back some 22 years, to when I was 10 years old, in fifth grade. There was a little girl in that class named Darlene Curley. She was a beautiful thing with long black hair. (Within a year or two, because she began growing rapidly and because she cut her hair short, she became no longer beautiful, though she was still pretty.) She was also lively, and very saucy. Both because of her sauciness and because of her attractiveness, there was, for a time, a regular feud on between her and all the boys in the class. I hated her (and secretly loved her) just like all the other boys. ~~in the class.~~ There is a certain duality in the male that is particularly visible in pre-adolescent boys. They are beginning to be

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attracted to girls, but they are nevertheless inclined to turn from them in scorn and devote their attention to manly, serious pursuits, like climbing trees, playing ball, and catching snakes. I think that some of this conflict lasts right through into manhood, though it is often quite submerged. It appears among many primitive tribes who believe a man's hunting weapons will lose their power if handled by a woman, or that a man must abstain from intercourse with his wife before going on a war expedition. It appears occasionally in literature, as in Wagner's Ring Cycle, where it is stated that the Rheingold will confer world power on its possessor provided he forsakes

JANUARY 27

the love of woman. The conflict is that between power and pleasure; or rather, between the austere pleasure of hard, demanding work and the soft pleasures of women. Because I am particularly attracted to austerity, power, hard work, etc., this conflict is especially well developed in me. Probably it was this conflict, as well as Darlene Curley's sauciness, that occasioned the war between her and the boys. But she was, at that time, one of those females whose attractions were so strong that one is at a loss to explain them. One by one the boys broke down, and I would observe them holding soft, sweet conversations with her. My scorn for these weaklings

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was absolutely unbounded. I was the stubbornest of the lot, and I still forced myself to hate her long after the others had all softened. I was terribly strongly attracted to her — type 2 of course — I knew that I was attracted to her, but from sheer stubborniess I would never permit myself to form in my mind the words "I like her very much." Instead, I had sadistic fantasies about her — I imagined myself inflicting all kinds of ghastly tortures on her. Sadistic satisfaction was not what I actually wanted from her — the sadistic ~~fooling~~ fantasies were merely a tool that I used to crush out my love for her. She apparently was as much attracted

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to me as I was to her. (Was this, perhaps, the result of my stubbornness in resisting her charms?) She would spend long intervals with her head lying on her arms on her desk, staring at my feet — she did this even after I openly scorned her for doing it. She ceased being saucy toward me and made a number of friendly overtures. I had just two lapses during which I softened toward her. For part of one day I was friendly toward her, and she, of course, toward me. But then, falling back into her old habits, she made one snotty crack at me, and I immediately hardened up again for a long time. Later, for one day, I was again

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friendly to her, and that timed hardened up again for no particular reason except my own stubbornness. In looking back on that time I feel a sense of fierce triumph and joy at my success in resisting her — and at the same time I experience an acute longing for the pleasures I might have had if I had yielded to her. Even today the name "Darlene" faintly stirs something in me.

The second, and I think the most severe, well-developed Type 2 of which I was victim began when I was 16 years old — a freshman at Harvard — and lasted about ~~a~~ two years. This girl's name was Carol Stone Wolman. Blond, blue-eyed, fairly slim build but

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by no means fragile. She was beautiful in a rather unusual way. Her figure had a serious flaw — her ass wasn't shaped right — but was otherwise very good. There was something very unusual about her face that is difficult to define. Something teasing and coyly enticing and at the same time something sensitive. Her mannerisms had that same teasing and coyly enticing air — whether she really was sensitive I don't know. I have seen two faces that strongly reminded me of hers. One was the face of a 19th-century slum girl in a book of old "art" photographs. As for the other, there is a well-known Grecian statue of Dionysios; in one hand

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the god holds a bunch of grapes, while a small, young satyr at his side nibbles at the grapes. As soon as I saw the face of that satyr, I was struck by the resemblance to Carol Wolman, both in form and, especially, in expression. But there were differences too, of course. It is curious that, long before I ever saw the picture of that statue, I had associated her in various ways with Greek mythology. Especially, I used to imagine her as a female satyr (which does not exist in Greek mythology, but I didn't know that) romping and coyly enticing me in some verdant meadow. We happened to be in many of the same courses, but these were always in large lecture halls, and by that age I was

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already very inhibited with attractive girls, so that it was difficult for me to get both courage and opportunity to speak to her.

I never saw her wear the least speck of make-up or jewelery. I don't think she ever did anything to her hair — just cut it and left it in a mop of curls. She was negligent about her clothing — but not ostentatiously negligent as some hippies are. Many young men wouldn't look twice at a girl like her, but there seemed to be a fairly large class of males who were nearly, or quite, as attracted to her as I was. Anyway, she appeared to have quite a few hangers-on. It certainly galled my pride

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to be one of a panting mob like that, and this intensified my usual tendency to rebel against feminine charms. But, unfortunately, hers were a little too powerful.

We happened to be in several of the same courses, but these were all in large lecture halls, and by that age I was already much inhibited with attractive girls, so that I found it difficult to get the combination of opportunity and courage necessary to initiate conversations with her. Actually, on only the second occasion on which I saw her, she sat down next to me in a class and initiated the first conversation between us. After that I don't think I spoke to her on more than 2 or 3 occasions during the first year and a half of

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that miserable infatuation. She was certainly attracted to me, or, at the least, interested by me. She certainly noticed how frequently I stared hungrily at her across one lecture hall or another. From time to time I would catch her looking at me sidelong, but her eyes would flick away as soon as I turned mine toward her. On a few occasions she took a seat next to mine, as if to give me a chance to open a conversation. On some of these occasions I turned sullen and kept my mouth shut — others took advantage of. On a priori grounds I assume she was not as much attracted to me as I was to her. I suppose she might have been (for some reason

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I was very attractive to girls from about age 16–19, despite the fact that I had a bad case of acne; a number of good-looking girls made obvious overtures to me during that period). On one of the occasions when she sat down next to me, a curious — I might almost say dramatic — incident occurred. I opened the conversation with some remarks about a tough homework problem (this was a class in number theory), and she gave an answer which indicated a serious mathematical misunderstanding on her part (it seems very few females have any real feel for or understanding of technical things). And so we conversed a little until the lecture started. ~~During~~ At one

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point during the lecture she turned her face toward me, smiling and laughing at something that had been said. In response, I turned my face toward her rather slowly, and looked her straight in the eyes, with a perfectly solemn expression. When I did this, her jaw dropped, as if in surprize, her face instantly became serious, and we looked each other straight in the eyes for a few seconds. Then I turned slowly away. That sudden change in her expression was rather astonishing. I don't know what it signified. At the end of the lecture I just stalked out without making any further attempt to converse with her, or even looking at her, because (as so often) I was ashamed

FEBRUARY 7

and angry at having such powerful and disabling feelings aroused in me by a god-damned ~~[illegible]~~ girl.

I never spoke to this girl enough to get to know her at all until just after the examinations at the end of my sophomore year. Walking across the campus, I found her sitting under a tree reading the Scientific American. I approached her with some inane remark about an examination, and so we set conversing — rather I should say arguing — for an hour or so. Within a few minutes (being in a half-angry mood, as so often with her) I managed to get into an argument with her about ethics. I, of course, disclaimed any respect for ideas of right and wrong (and, being 18 years old, I did so in

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rather wilder terms than I would today) and she took the opposite point of view. I was severely disappointed in her, not simply because she believed in ethics, but because all her opinions were perfectly stereotyped goodie — liberal, right down the line. I detected not a trace of that fire or wildness that one might have been tempted to infer from some of her mannerisms and facial expressions. I think she concluded that I was just plain awful, and I don't believe she was attracted to me at all after that. I was still attracted to her, but nevertheless I think that that conversation was the turning point for me and my interest began to wane from

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then on. I did subsequently ask her out once (she refused) but that was about the last gasp of that affair. One day it occurred to me that the thought of her hadn't even crossed my mind for 3 weeks — I was liberated, and glad to be so.

The last time I saw her was just before the end of my senior year. She said "hi", and I "cut her dead" — i.e., turned away without acknowledging her presence.

The third severe Type 2 from which I suffered occurred when I was 28 years old. The memory of this ~~g~~ girl does not stir me at all when I look back, but I think that is because I was

exposed to her only for a short period (less than 2 weeks, I believe). While it lasted, the attraction seemed as powerful as the others. This was after I had left Berkeley. I had a temporary job in a kind of mail-order warehouse. This girl was a god-damned greasy wetback spick. She spoke with only a slight accent, so probably had been in the U.S. for a long time. She certainly was a beauty — long black hair, darkish complexion — her features were not quite so regular as some, but there was something about them that seemed to speak of high biological quality. Her figure was simply exquisite — beautifully formed.

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Erect carriage, ~~smooth~~ smooth, leisurely, graceful walk. Her bearing was dignified, proud, maybe even a bit arrogant. About her personality, intelligence, etc., I know practically nothing, since I never spoke more than a few words to her. I first noticed her thus: I came to work a few minutes early one morning and found ~~a few~~ her and one or two other employes standing around waiting for things to start. At that period I had been doing chin-ups and push-ups to keep my arms in shape. On that morning I went up to one of the steel warehouse racks, jumped up, caught hold of the bar, pulled myself up, swung my body up and across to the

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opposite bar, then over and down again on the other side. Believe it or not, I was not showing off - In some warehouses where I worked during this period, I used to like to chin myself on the bars, climb up the vertical I-beams to the ceiling, and suchlike acrobatics, just for the fun of it, whether or not there was anyone around to see. After I had done my little trick, I caught that girl (I never did learn her name) watching me sidelong, out of the corner of her eye. Twice more during that day I caught her watching me sidelong. Of course, her eyes flicked away as soon as I caught her at it. Naturally, I interpreted this as sexual interest on her

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part (now I am not so sure of that). I began to notice her — was impressed with her beauty and the dignity of her bearing — and became disgustingly infatuated. Soon thereafter, while I was waiting all by myself in the morning before work, she walked in, and I gave her "good morning". To my surprize, I was greeted with downcast eyes and a cold, barely audible reply. Was she married? Ha! I took note of her hands, and indeed she wore those telltale rings. After that I had no serious ideas of making any advances toward her, but as long as she was there I could not keep my mind — and only with difficulty my eyes — off of her. Fortunately she left that place after I had

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been there not more than 2 weeks, and then my infatuation faded.

For some romantic literature dealing with the conflict between power and love — or, if you will, between manhood and pleasure — see Joseph Conrad's Arrow of Gold (the guy who loves, but tries to kill, Doña Rita) and Victor Hugo's Hunchback of Notre Dame (La Esmeralda and Claude Frollo).

Oct. 7, 1974: This latest infatuation is not quite so severe as the others — perhaps because age has rather quieted the intensity of my feelings generally. In this case, in contrast to that awful affair of Carol Wolman, I don't feel that I need the girl. I.e. if I were to be told that I would never see this Sandi again, it would not bother me very seriously —

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just make me feel ~~a~~ rather wistful. What I have been feeling is this: That to have a love affair with this girl would be unimaginably delightful. As long as there seems to be any possibility that such a thing could be brought about, a terribly powerful reward is held out before me, and I feel I can hardly refrain from trying to get it, even though it is very difficult for me to make the attempt. Consider: She has been back at Missoula for 2 or 3 weeks, and no particular friendliness had developed between us before she left. I live 80 or 90 miles from her. Thus, for me to make any kind of advance toward her ~~now~~ now would amount to confessing a special infatuation. And, of course, I have already mentioned that I am very inhibited with attractive females.

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So I sweated and panted and got all nervous trying to decide what to do. ~~It~~ I liked best the idea of a bold and straightforward approach, because boldness would somehow partially compensate for the shame of being sucked into such nonsense in the first place. So, after a struggle between many ~~misgivings~~ misgivings on the one hand, and a kind of contemptuous disregard for all the rest of the human race and its opinions on the other (this latter attitude has considerably increased with me since I came to Montana), I sent her the letter quoted below. I wanted to go to Missoula and deliver the proposition to her in person, but I confess that I didn't have the nerve to go through with that. Anyhow, she will surely be astonished when

she receives the following:

Dear Miss Boughton: I am going to lay before you a rather unusual proposition. For most of the last 3 years I have lived alone in a cabin in the hills not far from Lincoln. Because civilization is crowding in on me too much around here, it is my ambition to find a place in Alaska or northern Canada far enough back in the woods to be safe from civilization for some years at least. If and when I can get such a place, I would like to have a ... ah ... squaw to accompany me there. My proposition is that we should become sufficiently well acquainted so that you can intelligently consider the question whether you would like to go north with me as my wife.

Lest this proposition seem offensively

forward, let me emphasize that I am suggesting only that we get to know one another. The notion of your going north with me would be merely a prospect to be considered at some time in the indefinite future, if things should happen to work out well between us.

From our discussion concerning snowmobiles and trail bikes, which you may recall, I had the impression that you did not fully understand what is to be gained from wilderness life. What the wild country has to offer is neither scenery nor "sport" (though these do play some role), but freedom, independence, purposeful challenge (both physical and mental), and certain other benefits that I do not know how to describe to one who has never tasted them.

I am approaching you because I

was strongly attracted to you. There are a few young women around who are hungry for wilderness life and would gladly accept my terms. Through a classified ad I could possibly locate one with excellent qualifications, but if she did not happen to attract me ... well, in that case I would sooner go alone.

Very likely this proposition is too far out for you to take seriously. I can just imagine you giggling over this letter with your girlfriends. But that is your privilege, I suppose, and it won't do me any harm anyway.

In case you see fit to reply to this letter one way or the other, I am no longer at Kibbey Korner. (I couldn't stand that balloon-belted con-man, Joe, so I quit.) You can

Oct 7, 1974

write to me at Lincoln, address shown at the top of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

Would I actually go through with that — marry her and take her north with me? I confess my fantasies have often turned in that direction — which just goes to show how sick she's made me. But it is certainly against my better judgement, and I hope I don't get sucked into anything so utterly foolish. Still, it is just conceivable that such a thing could happen, and, even assuming the very best, it would cost me certain things that are of very great value to me.

Ha! I wonder what the outcome of this will be! As I've already said, I cannot make any rational judgement as to whether she was attracted to me. I am not likely to get an ~~ans~~ encouraging

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FEBRUARY 21

reply unless she was strongly attracted to me — if she was mildly attracted, that surprising proposition is likely to scare her off.

As soon as I had mailed that letter, I thought, "Christ! Now I've done it!" But I soon stopped sweating about it, and I have fallen into an attitude of insolent disregard about the matter, and a feeling that the whole thing is an interesting though potentially embarrassing adventure.

P.S. I just noticed [redacted] under the "Gemini" horoscope in yesterday's newspaper (the day I mailed the letter): "... You are able to put plans in motion [today] that bring satisfying results..." Ha! Wouldn't it be fun to believe in astrology?

FEBRUARY 22

Oct. 11: [redacted] One reason I have always found it very difficult to approach girls is that I have been so socially isolated — even more so in recent years than previously — that I don't have any idea how to go about it, nor do I know how to recognize any but the most obvious signs indicating that a female may find me attractive or the opposite. An example to illustrate this: One evening during my second year at the University of Michigan, I was sitting in the library studying. I noticed that a pretty girl sitting next to me kept looking at the table in front of me for no ascertainable reason. Finally she found some flimsy excuse to address a remark to

me, and a conversation ensued. She had no attractions out of the ordinary — she was just another pretty girl — but, being rather sex-starved,* I was glad enough to get friendly with her. There was obvious effort on both sides to keep the conversation going, she being considerably more successful in finding things to say than I was.** This went on for an hour or so, until it was time for the library to close. We got up to leave. I simply said goodbye and

*During my teens and early 20's I suffered severely from sex-starvation. By now these urges have been dulled sufficiently by age so that I no longer find them a serious problem, & even when I am living where I have to see attractive women regularly. When I am living

moved to go. When I did this, her mouth dropped open and she looked surprised and hurt, as if I had done something very unexpected. Well, what was I supposed to do at that point? I don't know. I suspect there is a kind of ritual about these things, a series of more or less conventional stages through which a sexual acquaintance is supposed to progress. Maybe ~~the proper~~ at that point I was supposed to offer to walk her home. I don't know. I guess I would have done that if I had

alone in the woods and don't have to see women, sex is a negligible factor.

** Interesting light on my personality: I used to find it difficult to find

happened to think of it. I do not now regret having missed that opportunity. Her name was Nancy White.

Oct. 15: No answer yet from that girl, so I suppose I'm not going to get one. Not surprising. Still, I would have preferred to get a negative answer rather than no answer at all. As it is, I am strongly tempted to pursue the matter further. It is possible that she was offended or

things to say to keep a social conversation going (though I find it much easier now). Yet I recall one job-hunting experience: After the job interview the employment agency woman told me that the fellow who interviewed me liked me very much, one reason being that I "asked questions and seemed interested — most of those who come in never

in a way ~~too timid~~ frightened by my eccentric approach — conceivably an apology and a fresh attempt along different lines ~~may~~ might bring a more favorable result. ~~It~~ It's not likely, but I find her so very desirable that I am reluctant to leave any stone unturned. Of course I often feel embarrassed at having made an approach to her of a kind likely to excite ridicule, but it is interesting that I

say anything." Of course, I had ~~not~~ made a point of asking questions and making conversation even though I did not enjoy it. Most of the interviewees did not have the willpower or initiative ~~to do this~~ or whatever it takes to do this — yet in a purely social situation they would doubtless make much better conversationalists than me because it would come naturally

feel very little embarrassment before her; what makes me uncomfortable is mostly the idea of her telling other people about it all. But the thing which most surprises me, and which I can't explain with any confidence, is the fact that the admixture of antagonism in my feelings toward her is so slight. When we were both working at the gas station, I had a few minor revulsions of feeling toward her, but these were few, feeble, and short-lived. Since then, I don't think I have felt any rebellion at all against my feelings toward her. I fully realize that I would not feel any respect for her if it were not for this erotic infatuation, and I view my own infatuation with ~~to~~ them without their having to make any effort.

contempt, yet, for the present at least, I have no desire to rebel against these feelings, and even if I should get an unequivocal rejection from her, I hardly feel (now?) as if I would resent her for it. (My feelings may change later, of course.) The only explanations I can find for this are (i) the fact that age has mellowed me somewhat — one's feelings are different at 32 from what they were at 22; and (ii) On the basis of what information I have, her personality seemed open and generous, without any social competitiveness. Also, perhaps, what I want from her is a little different from what I wanted from (say) Carol Wolman. I do not particularly want soulful communion; I want to take care of her, be good to her, make her happy; of course I want her love,

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FEBRUARY 29

too, physically as well as in every other way. Anyhow, whether it is due to a change in me or a difference in her, this is the one girl I feel I could love with comparatively few conflicting feelings. But it seems pretty unlikely that I will ever have that ~~chance~~ opportunity. Of course, if I ever did marry her or anything like that, it would cost me a great deal.

I have become exceedingly fond both of the ~~of~~ autonomy and of the mental tranquility that come with complete solitude.

Oct. 16: All this has stirred up old memories. Last night I dreamed about Carol Wolman. She was a little older, but not much, and it seemed to have enhanced her beauty. The situation was the usual — that it was in real life — a college classroom —, but in the dream she was

MARCH 1

looking at me more than I was at her. I woke up, or half awoke, after the dream with a very strong, bittersweet sense of melancholy, of regret for lost youth and missed opportunities, centering on Carol Wolman, but with other things dragged in, including something vague and indefinable. I stated before that I fell out of love with her, and that is true, but the memory of that strange face of hers still stirs something, and there are times, just once in a great while, when that echo comes in surprisingly strongly. As much as this Sandi has affected me, she doesn't quite do to me what Carol Wolman did. I do not think it is any longer possible for me to be affected by any girl the way I was by Carol Wolman. At age 32 these things simply

MARCH 2

do not have the poignant intensity that they do at age 16 or 18. No doubt I am better off never having been involved with her any more than I was; still, I felt last night a powerful sense of loss, of something missed, that lingers a little this morning. By now she must be about 34 years old; most likely a frowzy housewife, her looks merely suggesting what she was 12 or 14 years ago, with a couple of sordid brats whom she is bringing up to be a pair of warped little liberal-intellectual sickies.

Alas, that sense of lost youth and missed opportunity is something I fear I am likely to be feeling 10 or 15 years from now with regard to something that is much more

MARCH 3

important to me than any erotic involvement. I mean the kind of life that I have tasted in these mountains, but which I have never yet been able to live in close to pure form, without interference from civilization — the kind of thing that to me is some how best symbolized by new-fallen snow and the hunting of snowshoe hares by tracking. At age 32, one is only 8 years from 40, after ~~which~~ which one's health might start to break down at any time. For that matter, it might start to break down tomorrow; and with the economic situation looking very bleak for the forseeable future, it is not going to be easy to save up the money I will need if I am to try to get that cabin in the

far north which would let me lead the life I want. These considerations contributed largely to that strange sense of melancholy that I felt after the dream last night.

Oct. 23: As I mentioned before, I was reluctant to leave any stone unturned in pursuing that Sandi creature, so, a week ago, I sent her the following letter:

Dear Miss Boughton:

No doubt I have made myself look very foolish already, and I suppose I am going to make myself look even more foolish now, but that doesn't worry me particularly. I haven't had an answer to my letter, and that amounts to a negative answer. I would appreciate it if you would tell me why your answer was

negative. Presumably it was either because you found me personally unattractive or because the manner in which I approached you offended you, or scared you off, or something of that sort. In the first case there is no point in my pursuing the matter further. In the second case, I abjectly apologize for any offense I may have caused. My only excuse is that I am extremely ignorant and inexperienced in dealing with women. I simply don't know the proper way to go about these things. So let me start all over again and give it another try.

It should be obvious by now that I am infatuated with you. Any involvement with women is contrary to my better judgement. But

MARCH 6

after you left Kibbey Korner I found that I couldn't forget you, so I said to hell with better judgement — hence my previous letter. If it is agreeable to you, I would like to take you out a few times. Once you get to know me, you may find that you ~~may~~ like me or you may find that you don't. Anyway, I would like to give it a try. As you might guess from my first letter, my interest is of a potentially serious nature. A little casual sex-play is not what I am looking for.

Of course, if you have no interest in me at all, you may as well give a flat "no" for your answer, which will save us both from wasting our time. If you give me a

MARCH 7

negative answer, or if you do not answer at all, I promise that I will not bother you again, so you needn't worry about that.

No answer yet, so I guess I'm not going to get one to that letter either. I still am reluctant to give up, but now I guess I'll have to, since I promised not to bother her again. Funny thing is that I don't resent her in the least for rejecting me. Oh, well.

Since I have had so very little to do with females, the question arises — to what extent is sex-starvation responsible for the 3 post-pubertal infatuations I have recorded here? Of course it is difficult to answer with certainty. The

MARCH 8

following is perhaps the best I can do. Supposing I had associated with many different girls and had had intercourse with some of them: I think I would have had as many, or very likely more, infatuations of the sort recorded here, but the girls with whom I became infatuated would have been more appropriate choices for me because there would have been more to choose from. I say this because there is something about an intense, passionate erotic-love relationship that I find very attractive and that I do not believe would be provided by physical sex or even by the less intense kind of affection that would grow up through long association. This last kind of love I would not even be

MARCH 9

interested in because it would not be worth the price in autonomy and certain other things. Only in the 4 cases recorded here have I found something extra, something powerful enough to tempt me seriously to surrender myself to it. Against my better judgement, of course. I do believe that a more satisfying life is possible for me without any such involvement — yet such things can be so overpoweringly tempting.

Nov. 1: I have dreamed about that Sandi girl a couple of times before, and I dreamed about her again last night. Like most dreams, this one was vague and disconnected. At first we were doing some kind of work together. I was

MARCH 10

thinking, or hoping, that she might like me, at least a little; but on the whole her attitude toward me was half disdainful, as if my existence were a burden to be only just tolerated. Then she was talking to a big, somewhat overweight fellow in a leather jacket — a motorcyclist type. She had to go somewhere or catch a train or something. It was time for me to go to bed and I lay down, and she went into another room with the motorcyclist to neck with him, remarking on the way that she had about three hours which would be about enough time. I interpreted it to mean that they would probably neck for awhile to work themselves up, then have intercourse, then she would go catch her train. (This seems to

MARCH 11

represent the fact that to most young people today sex appears to be casual and matter-of-course, whereas to me it is anything but that.) I felt bitter and resentful about this, but, curiously, not resentful in the sense of wanting to revenge myself on her in any way ~~that~~ whatever. I felt at the same time a firm determination to persist and win her at any cost if at all possible, though I was at a loss as to how to do it. After I awoke I felt for awhile very heavy and melancholy. That melancholy feeling was augmented from another source — as I mentioned before, things are pretty well ruined around here, and there are plenty of difficulties in the way of my getting that cabin

NOV 1, 1914

MARCH 12

in the far north — would still be plenty of difficulties even if I had lots of money. I am just sick of the burden of dealing with people and feel like taking to the woods and seeing how many people I can pick off with my rifle before the cops get me. My infatuation with that girl seems to be getting gradually dulled, but it flares up from time to time, and I think it would come back in full strength if I were to meet her again. With regard to the melancholy feelings mentioned above, it is interesting that despite these I do not feel depressed — i.e., I am quite ready for activity and feel I am ~~functioning~~ functioning at a pretty high level.

It is frustrating. I look at

MARCH 13

my reflection in my cabin window, and I see a pretty good specimen of a man. Not heavily muscled, but sinewy and hard, with sufficient muscle showing. I am in excellent condition. My facial features naturally are coarser and not so handsome as when I was 19 or 20, but (especially with my beard, which I have let grow again) I look more virile now. I have plenty of brains, varied talents, and a kind of general competence at most kinds of work. I suppose my personality is pleasant enough when I am with people whom I like and with whom I feel at ease. I see no reason why I might not have been able to win that girl's love — except the fact that I am so cut off socially from the rest of the human race that I inevitably seem

(37)

MARCH 14

peculiar, an outsider. I don't know how to talk to girls and find it extremely difficult to make the attempt. By no means ~~do~~ do I regret being an outsider — not even for that girl would I want to become one of that mob of monkeys in the technological zoo. But it is so damned frustrating to feel that I am easily a good enough specimen to merit her and yet be unable to do anything about it.

Nov. 7: That damned girl! I thought my trouble was fading, but lately it's come back as bad as ever. I went to the library at the University of Montana to look up some mathematical things. I had been intending to do this for some time but

MARCH 15

had been in no ~~hurry~~ hurry about it. The main reason I went now was because I figured if I were to frequent that place to some extent I might run into her by chance, in which case I could perhaps, if my nerve didn't fail, get somewhere with her without really breaking my promise not to bother her again. If it were ~~me~~ anyone else but me in this situation I would certainly sneer, and produce some caustic humor on the subject. To show how low I have sunk, I bought a new pair of pants the other day just for this expedition. Blue jeans. They are — no, not tight (I haven't sunk that low) — but they are tailored to fit the form much more accurately than the baggy but comfortable work pants I

MARCH 16

usually wear. They have a nice full-length mirror in the men's room in that library, and with my figure nicely revealed in jeans and ~~T-shirt~~ T-shirt, I was obliged to conclude that I have a very well-proportioned physique — rugged and sturdy (yeah! a big Mr. Apollo. If I was no longer too lean as I was in my teens. This made me so confident ~~that~~ that (not having met her by chance) I decided I should call on her at her dormitory and politely — even a little humbly — ask her to explain why she rejected me. Then maybe I could persuade her to go out with me once, anyway. Then, I would think, she ought to be attracted

MARCH 17

to me to a reasonable extent, anyway — I'm in excellent condition, good-looking, intelligent, educated, and capable of exhibiting a pleasant personality. She would have had only a limited inkling of most of these advantages from what she saw of me at that service station.

Anyway, I chickened out as usual, and couldn't go through with it. It's so maddening — if I try to phone her or anything like that I completely lose my nerve when it comes to the point of doing it. It was only with difficulty that I could even send that first letter. It drives me nuts. In fact a significant part of

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MARCH 18

my desire to get her now arises simply from stubbornness and frustration. Of course I realize that I might be disappointed once I got to know her — but —, on the basis of what I do know of her, she is the only girl toward whom I felt I could (perhaps) give myself without reservation. With Carol Wolman and the others there were always conflicting feelings.

Nov. 8: Went cutting poles with Glen Williams today. Had another good example of how the right woman can make a man foolish. Glen told me — and kept telling me and telling me —

MARCH 19

about a female hitchhiker he picked up, about 25 years old. Over and over he would say "gee, she was a nice ~~girl~~ gal, real good looking, the kind you get attached to right quick." He bought her cigarettes and pepsi, fed her, and apparently seriously suggested to her that she should help him with pole-cutting for a while. Evidently she was hard up — but not that hard up. That Glen — what a dumb jackass! Of course, that Sandi has made me foolish; but the difference is that I know very well she's made me foolish, whereas Glen seems to be perfectly unconscious of how foolish he looks. He's married of course, but he

MARCH 20

gets along very poorly with his wife Dolores. I suspect that the only thing that keeps them together is their little daughter, whom they both love dearly. To judge from what I have seen, Glen often speaks cruelly to Dolores, whereas she seems to restrain herself, probably for the sake of the little girl. But it would be unfair to draw conclusions from that. She may do something at home that bothers Glen. For example, I wouldn't be overly surprised if she complains about his being a poor provider or throws it up to him. Women may not realize how deeply that could cut a man.

MARCH 21

(Actually he doesn't do badly as a provider under the circumstances, having been laid off from his job a couple of years ago. Given the unemployment problems around here, many families in similar circumstances would have been on welfare, but with pole- and firewood-cutting, Glen seems to get by O.K.)

Nov. 10: I have a certain stubborn persistence, a refusal to ~~relinquish~~ relinquish hope for any important reward, which to a considerable extent accounts for (a) my success with some of the mathematical problems I have solved, (b) the fact that I have gone as far as I have in seeking out wilderness life,

E-1

MARCH 22

whereas most of the ~~other~~ teenage boys and young men who dream of life beyond the pale of civilization never do anything about it,* (c) the fact that I am still panting as madly as ever for that Sandi girl. I drove to Missoula again today, swearing up and down that if I did not have the nerve to

* I am reminded of an occasion when I was looking at some of the exhibits in the anthropology museum at Berkeley. There was a shaggy, bearded young man there, apparently an anthropology major, who was explaining to his girlfriend some of the exhibits of paleolithic artifacts and ~~exhibits~~ reconstructions of neanderthals hunting with spears, etc. She asked him,

MARCH 23

personally ask for her at her dormitory, then, at the least, I would telephone and ask her (pretty please) to explain why she didn't want to have anything to do with me; and then, if the explanation left any room for hope, I would try to persuade her to go out with me once, anyway. ~~This~~

But, again, I found myself completely unable to do anything, so went home quite defeated. I kept my feelings under control until I had built a fire, fetched wood, and otherwise

"would you have liked to have lived in those days?" He answered "Yes!" with such fervor that I felt sure he was a man after my own heart.

MARCH 24

gotten set up for the night. Then I sat down, put my head on my hands, and cried from a combination of frustration and a bitter regret for what I am missing through my inability to even try to get that girl. I would point out to the reader that since my latter teens I have never shed one tear over physical pain — not even when I scalded all the skin off the top of my foot 3 years ago. A few years ago when I was having a deep cavity drilled without anesthetic, the Dentist remarked 2 or 3 times, "Gee, you're a hard guy to hurt!" It hurt, alright, but I wasn't about to

MARCH 25

let him know it. Yet on account of that girl I just sat and ~~sobbed~~ sobbed.

Nov. 11: I don't feel very badly about that girl this morning because I guess I have lost all hope of getting her, so that the pressure is ~~off~~ and I just feel wistful about it. Besides, this is a fine morning, with fresh snow and animal tracks. Still, there is an ache. She had aroused such tender feelings in me. To have had her for a wife ... oh, I would have been good to her, really. Yet for all that, I know that if it weren't for sex, I wouldn't respect her.

Nov. 12: Ever since the latter part of

MARCH 26

yesterday (by which time I had completely recovered from my frustration over those abortive attempts) I have felt no worry or other ~~frustration~~ discomfort over that girl. I think I am entirely cured of that infatuation — though it ~~might~~ would likely come back again if I were to meet her again in the relatively near future. It is as I said some time ago in these notes — I don't feel I need her. I was in a sweat over her only so long as I felt there was some chance of getting her. All the same, this morning I sent her the letter copied below. This letter correctly represents my feelings evening before last, when I returned from Missoula.

MARCH 27

By yesterday morning, when I actually wrote the letter, those feelings had already begun to fade. This morning, when I sent it, I was laughing over it; but I sent it anyway because it is an interesting adventure and because if she does answer it will gratify my curiosity — besides, it was frustrating to get no response whatever to the first 2 letters, for which reason it will be a satisfaction to get any kind of response to this one. It is a grovelling, belly-crawling letter, but I don't care. As I have mentioned before, I have achieved a certain degree of indifference to other people's opinions of me.

MARCH 28

Dear Miss Boughton:

I promised not to bother you again, but I am going to break that promise, just once. It is pretty clear that you are not interested in having anything to do with me, so I have given up hope of that. But I want very badly to know why you won't have anything to do with me. I have had no answer of any kind from you and it bothers me seriously. Please Sandi. An explanation of your ~~—~~ attitude toward me would relieve my mind. If you have unpleasant things to say about me, just go ahead and say them right out. You needn't worry about hurting my feelings — I am

MARCH 29

enough of a stoic to accept such things with equanamity. And you needn't worry that an answer from you will encourage me to bother you further. Obviously, it is not going to encourage me to hear why you don't like me. Look — I humble myself before you — something I have never done before anyone in the past and which I don't ever expect to do again. It won't cost you anything to give me an answer, just once.

For reasons that I can't fully explain, you have stirred my feelings in a way that no ~~—~~ girl has done before. If I had had ~~—~~ any encouragement from you I no doubt would

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MARCH 30

have fallen passionately in love with you. It may be that you would never have liked me in any case, but possibly I would have done better if I had been able to approach you properly. I have been such a loner for so long that my social skills (which never amounted to much in the first place) have degenerated into virtual nonexistence. I don't know how to talk to girls, and, what is worse, I am afraid of them. I had been very well satisfied with my solitude, and had come to terms with my desire for women, which had been mostly physical — until I had the misfortune to meet you. It was then

MARCH 31

that I began to deeply regret my ignorance and incapacity in this direction.

I find it terribly frustrating. You may not have seen it under those shapeless work clothes, but I have a very well-proportioned physique and I am in excellent condition. I have plenty of brains — I am a Harvard graduate and spent 2 years as assistant professor of mathematics at Berkeley. (If you feel inclined to doubt that statement, look for my name in the author indices of various issues of Mathematical Reviews — available in the U. of M. library — between the years 1966 and 1971.) I have a ~~vanity~~ variety of talents, and virtues.

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APRIL 1

such as persistence, willpower, and a kind of general ability that has made me unusually competent at many kinds of work from mathematics to post-cutting to elk-hunting. I ought to be good enough to win your esteem, yet when I try to do something about it I can only make a fool of myself and earn, probably, nothing but your contempt.

I apologize for any annoyance I have caused you. I would appreciate it very much if you would answer my question this time, even if your answer can consist of nothing but derogatory statements concerning me. Please. Sincerely yours,

APRIL 2

Nov. 19:

I am now perfectly cured of that affair, thank Heaven!

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